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PRESS RELEASE

AMBASSADOR MORIARTY ANNOUNCES \$40 MILLION IN ADDITIONAL FOOD AID

DHAKA, MAY 4 -- U.S. Ambassador James F. Moriarty made the following remarks at a press conference at the American Club in Dhaka today:

(Begin Text)

I am pleased to announce that the United States Government is donating an additional \$40 million dollars worth of food aid to Bangladesh. This donation is in two parts. There is \$30 million to be distributed over a three-year period that targets school children throughout the country via a school feeding program. The additional \$10 million is emergency food aid.

Today's \$30 million donation shows my government's commitment to contributing towards Bangladesh's policy of universal primary education. The program will benefit approximately 350,000 school children throughout Bangladesh by providing a 75 gram packet of fortified biscuits each day to primary age school children. The goal of the program is to increase primary school enrollment, attendance and reduce dropout rates. Additional objectives are to improve the attention span and learning capacity of students by alleviating short-term hunger. We are providing a means and an incentive for children to stay in school so Bangladesh can prepare the next generation of leaders.

The primary beneficiaries of the new \$10 million emergency food aid will be those still struggling to recover from the devastating effects of Cyclone Sidr. This \$10 million donation will be used for direct food distribution, recovery activities through food-for-work and cash-for-work programs, emergency school feeding, and feeding pregnant and lactating mothers and children.

As I discussed with the Chief Adviser earlier today, the United States Government remains committed to assisting the Government of Bangladesh and its people. Part of this funding will be used to help people affected by Cyclone Sidr. The remainder benefits primary school children in all areas of Bangladesh. My message to the people of Bangladesh is a simple one: We had been here before the

cyclone; we were here during the initial emergency relief phase; and we are here now to help Bangladesh move forward.

The United States Government has provided more than \$5 billion in development assistance to Bangladesh since independence. Over \$2.5 billion of that was in food aid.

Since October, the U.S. Government has pledged a total of over \$70 million for food aid to Bangladesh, in addition to the \$40 million I just announced.

Immediately after Cyclone Sidr, the United State provided \$20 million to alleviate human suffering. We also fund an ongoing food aid program of \$48 million that focuses on sustainable development. This program is implemented in 3,500 poor and vulnerable villages in the char, haor, and coastal regions. In addition the U.S. Government donated \$2 million to WFP last week to feed primary school children in the Sidr-affected areas.

We continue to look for other ways to assist. Just last week, the US Government provided \$100,000 as an emergency response to alleviate the suffering of the people in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. This emergency funding will assist more than 25,000 families in the hill districts jeopardized by the severe crop damage caused by the rat infestation. Affected farmers will receive seeds so they can plant new crops before the onset of the monsoon.

In my first press conference after arriving in Bangladesh, I emphasized the importance of the 3 Ds--democracy, development, and denial of space to terrorists—to our bilateral relationship. This assistance will help us advance each of these three goals.

Bangladesh is a country with a great future. These latest donations reflect our commitment to helping build a brighter tomorrow, even for Bangladesh's most vulnerable citizens.

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#As prepared for delivery

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Note: A Bangla translation of this article is also available at the American Center. If you are interested in the translation, please call the American Center Press Section, Tel: 8837150-4, Fax: 9885688; e-mail: DhakaPA@state.gov; Website: [http:// dhaka.usembassy.gov](http://dhaka.usembassy.gov)